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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [OSCE](#) [PREL](#) [KZ](#)
SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN - PRESIDENT NAZARBAYEV DISCUSSES MADRID
COMMITMENTS IN OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY ADDRESS

Classified By: Pol-Econ Chief Steven Fagin, Reasons 1.4. (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) President Nazarbayev touched on Kazakhstan's Madrid commitments on democratic reform at the conclusion of his June 29 speech to the annual session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, which is being held in Astana from June 29 to July 2. This is the first time that Nazarbayev has publicly remarked on the commitments, which were incorporated into Foreign Minister Tazhin's address at the November 2007 Madrid OSCE ministerial meeting, where Kazakhstan was selected to be 2010 OSCE chairman.

¶2. (U) While Nazarbayev shied away from using the term "Madrid commitments," he nevertheless went in turn through each of them, which entail amending Kazakhstan's electoral, political party, and media legislation by the end of 2008. Nazarbayev explained that "at the present moment," Kazakhstan's constitution "allows for the implementation of several very important (policies) in the further democratization of society." The first, he said, is the establishment of a legal mechanism under which parliament would be composed of not less than two political parties. The second is the creation of "more favorable conditions" for the government's registration of political parties. The third is the "perfection of procedural issues" in the electoral process. The fourth, Nazarbayev explained, is the elimination of excessive bureaucratic barriers regulating media activity. He concluded by saying that he hoped these proposals would be reviewed by parliament.

¶3. (U) As he has done in other speeches, Nazarbayev did place several caveats on further democratic reforms, contending that Kazakhstan's "understanding of democratic processes" is based on both universal democratic principles and the "existence of national-cultural specifics in the mechanisms for implementing these principals." Discussing political party registration, he said that parties must strictly accord to the constitution -- a likely reference to constitutional provisions prohibiting religious-based parties as well as the receipt by parties of foreign financing. Discussing the elimination of barriers to media activity, Nazarbayev stressed that the government must still ensure that the media does not violate human rights, social and religious tolerance, or the public safety.

¶4. (U) In an earlier part of the speech, Nazarbayev explained that as 2010 OSCE chairman, Kazakhstan intended to focus on vital security issues and on inter-cultural and inter-confessional dialogue. Kazakhstan would support the OSCE's efforts to combat racism, intolerance, and discrimination, and its chairmanship would facilitate the resolution of problems in Central Asia as well as in Afghanistan, Nazarbayev added.

¶5. (C) Comment: Prime Minister Masimov, Foreign Minister Tazhin, State Secretary Saudabayev, and Presidential Administration head Kelimbetov, who were in the audience during the speech, were clearly elated that Nazarbayev

discussed the Madrid commitments -- which they likely had personally pressed him to do. As we have previously noted in our reporting, though much work remains, there is sufficient time for Kazakhstan to follow through on the commitments by year's end. It is principally a matter of political will. Following the address, Masimov told visiting OSCE Parliamentary Assembly CODEL Hastings that Nazarbayev's remarks are effectively an order to the bureaucracy to move forward. Even the normally skeptical Ninel Fokina, head of the Almaty Helsinki Committee, told us that Nazarbayev's comments were a "welcome sign." She seconded Masimov's assessment that based on Nazarbayev's words, the ministries will take action. While Nazarbayev's proposals were ambiguous and minimalist, they nevertheless provide a strong basis for us and our like-minded partners to continue pressing for the legislative changes necessary to meet the full spirit of the commitments. End Comment.

16. (U) CODEL Hastings did not/not clear this cable.
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